

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

NSCE-00 SEC-03 L-03 PRS-01 NSC-10 RSR-01 /062 W

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R 291705 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4126

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 1880

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, EFIN, CS

SUBJECT: VESCO CASE: EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE ON LEBLANC CHARGES

REF: SAN JOSE 1874

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY
AMBASSADOR TO LOCAL PRESS EVENING OF MAY 28. RELEASE

WAS TIMELY BECAUSE WIRE SERVICE STORIES BASED ON LEBLANC'S
PRESS CONFERENCE (REFTEL) WERE FILED BACK ON LATIN SERVICE
AND PRINTED IN PAPERS YESTERDAY EVENING AND THIS MORNING
(MAY 29). EMBASSY
PRESS RELEASE WAS THERE FORE IMMEDIATELY
AVAILABLE AND WAS PRINTED IN ALL MORNING PAPERS.

2. TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE IS AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE:
I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 27 MR. NORMAN
LEBLANC HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA,
WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, AND ON
THAT OCCASION STATED THAT A MEMBER OF MY STAFF,
MR. PETER JOHNSON, WAS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CIA
ASSIGNED TO COSTA RICA, FOR PRINCIPLE PURPOSE OF
HARRASSING MR. ROBERT VESCO AND HIS ASSOCIATES IN ORDER
TO GET THEM OUT OF THE COUNTRY. THIS IS A MALICIOUS AND
UNFOUNDED ACCUSATION WHICH I CATEGORICALLY DENY.

QUOTE: MR. LEBLANC STATED THAT HE HAD LEARNED " WHO MR. JOHNSON
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WAS" ONLY THE PREVIOUS HAY FROM - " RELIABLE INFORMANT IN WASHINGTON". I DO NOT KNOW WHO MR. LEDMANC' S INFORMANT WAS, BUT I DO KNOW THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY WRONG IN THIS INSTANCE.

QUOTE: MR. JOHNSON IS A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, ASSIGNED TO THIS EMBASSY AS SECOND SECRETARY AND CHIEF OF THE POLITICAL OFFICE SECTION. HE IS NOT NOW, AND NEVER HAS BEEN, AN EMPLOYEE OF THE CIUV NEITHER HE NOR ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE U. S. DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN COSTA RICA HAS ANY SUCH TASK AS THAT OF " HARRASSING MR. VESCO AND GETTING HIM OUT OF COSTA RICA." NO ONE CONNECTED WITH THIS EMBASSY IS HARRASSING MR. LEBLANC, NOR MAKING MALICIOUS CALLS BY TELEPHONE, NOR TAKING PHOTOS OF MR. LEBLANC AS HE ALLEGES.

MR. LEBLANC CHARGES THAT THE CIA IS HARRASSING AND INVESTIGATING MR. VESCO AND HIS ASSOCIATES. THIS IS NOT TRUE. THE CIA IS NOT INVESTIGATING MR. VESCO NOR ANY OF HIS ASSOCIATES, AND IS NOT HARRASSING THEM. THESE CHARGES ARE RIDICULOUS. I DIG NOT LOSE. WITH COMMENT ONLY BECAUSE IF THESE ACCUSATIONS GO UNCHALLENGED, THE EFFECT WOULD BE TO SOW SUSPICION IN THE MINDS OF COSTA RICANS AND TO DAMAGE THE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS THAT EXIST BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. I HAVE THEREFORE FELT OBLIGED TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. END QUOTE. VAKY

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NMAFVVZCZ

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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Drafter: n/a
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